

Early Canal Locks,
Channahon, Illinois
WILL COUNTY

ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL
LOCKS AND LOCK HOUSE

HABS Ill. No. 157

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99-CHA.V,

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. Ill.1.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Earl H. Reed, District Officer,
435 North Michigan Ave., Chicago

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EARLY CANAL LOCKS
Channahan, Will County, Illinois

Owner - Canal Commission, State of Illinois

Date of Erection - About 1845

Builder - Will Goodings, Canal Engineer

Present Condition - Fair. South Gate now sealed.
Dilapidated old portions have been restored
according to original design.

Material of Construction - Lock-house,- frame on
rubble-stone foundation. Lock-chamber,- sides
of stone on wood piling with oak plank floor.
Gates,- wood with iron fittings.

Additional Data - Lock No. 6 of the Illinois and
Michigan Canal is located at the junction of
the canal with the DuPage River. Together with
its companion Lock No. 7 and accompanying spill-
ways, feeder and dam, it constitutes an out-
standing example of pioneer engineering as it
successfully solved the problem of carrying the
canal across the river. The difference of level
from the top of No. 6 to the bottom of No. 7 is
approximately 18 feet, with the river level
roughly half-way between. The lock-house was
built in Lockport, seat of canal operation and
transported to the site, as were all other prac-
ticable portions of the structure.

Louis Joliet, who accompanied Marquette over
this low divide, first suggested the building
of the waterway in 1674. In 1820 a first sur-
vey was made and two years later Congress granted
a right-of-way and authorized construction. The
first earth was turned in 1836, but owing to
scarcity of funds and many legal and technical
complications it was not until 1848 that the
first boats passed through. By 1862 there were
over seven thousand canal boat clearances annually
and one year over a million tons of freight. But
with the development of the railroads decline was
inevitable and the last freight barge was locked
through about 1905.

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Source - Andreas, Vol.1, Page 165-173. Report of
1912 Canal Commission. Peter Conroy, Lock-
tender.

This greatest of mid-west canals was a triumph
of early enterprise and contributed immeasurably
to the growth of Chicago and Northern Illinois.

The State of Illinois has now made this site,
together with the land surrounding Lock No. 7
on the south bank of the DuPage River, a State
Park.

By

E. J. Conroy

EW 6/9/57